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Intelligence**

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Khamenei and Rafsanjani: Rivals for Power in Iran

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An Intelligence Assessment

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An Intelligence Assessment

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Key Judgments

*Information available
as of 16 December 1983
was used in this report.*

The views of Iranian President Ali Khamenei and *Majlis* (Assembly) Speaker Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, two of the most powerful leaders in Iran, strongly influence Iran's policies toward the war with Iraq, succession to Khomeini, the economy, and the United States. Khamenei and Rafsanjani derive much of their authority from their close personal relationship with Ayatollah Khomeini. In addition, Khamenei, as President, controls much of the government's administrative apparatus. Rafsanjani, as Speaker of the *Majlis*, is in charge of the legislative arm of the government.

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Not surprisingly, Khamenei and Rafsanjani are rivals for power. Neither is of sufficient clerical rank to directly succeed Khomeini, but each wants to be influential behind the scenes. Rafsanjani seems to favor Ayatollah Montazeri, a more senior cleric who is currently the front-runner to succeed Khomeini. Reportedly Rafsanjani hopes to manipulate Montazeri, who is widely viewed in Iran as weak. President Khamenei, on the other hand, favors rule by a three- or five-man council of senior clerics. Khamenei reportedly hopes that such a council would dilute Montazeri's power and limit Rafsanjani's ability to manipulate policy.

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The personal conflict between the two men is aggravated by institutional rivalry. Since early 1982 the office of the Presidency has been strengthened by Khamenei, enabling him to begin consolidating his authority within the regime. At the same time, the *Majlis* under Rafsanjani's leadership has become an influential lawmaking body, and Rafsanjani has emerged as the most influential personality in Iran after Ayatollah Khomeini. The two have criticized each other publicly, and Ayatollah Khomeini has been forced to intervene to limit their rivalry. He permits neither to achieve a decisive advantage over the other.

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In contrast to their differences over the succession, the positions of Khamenei and Rafsanjani on other issues such as the war, the economy, and foreign policy are similar. They both favor centralization of the economy and have recently moderated their private positions on Iran's war policy. They are both hostile toward the United States. They probably favor a tolerant attitude toward the Soviets and closer cooperation with Moscow on economic and military matters as long as there is no strategic military understanding or massive presence of Soviet experts in Iran. Both support the "export of the revolution" by means of propaganda and subversion, although Khamenei is slightly less radical than Rafsanjani on this issue.

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The rivalry between Khamenei and Rafsanjani has important implications for the future of Iran and, as a result, for US policy in the Persian Gulf. We believe it is likely that the clerics, Rafsanjani, and Khamenei will work out a mutually acceptable division of power after Khomeini's death, at least in the short term, and that Iran's policies will remain much the same as under the Ayatollah. A smooth succession is likely because no cleric will defy Khomeini's written will soon after his death and all the clerics know that an intense succession struggle could destroy their hold on power. A regime influenced by Rafsanjani and Khamenei could moderate its foreign policy stance slightly as the two men become more confident in their ability to retain power and in their ability to work together. Eventually their hostility toward the United States could lessen if they found it expedient, but neither man is strong enough to alter unilaterally Iran's relations with the United States. Relations with the USSR will probably depend on factors beyond the control of either man such as Soviet support for Iraq and for Iranian dissidents and Soviet actions in Afghanistan.

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In the less likely event that the two men do not work out a mutually satisfactory sharing of power, Iran is likely to experience serious political turmoil. While the Ayatollah is alive, he can keep their rivalry in check. Once he passes from the scene, however, their rivalry could threaten the cohesiveness of the clerical regime. Both men have longstanding ties to the Revolutionary Guard, and both recently have begun to court elements in the armed forces. If they and other leading clerics cannot reach a power-sharing compromise, Iran could plummet into civil war and chaos, threatening oil exports and providing the Soviets with an excuse to intervene.

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Khamenei and Rafsanjani: Rivals for Power in Iran

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President Ali Khamenei and *Majlis* (Assembly) Speaker Ali Akbar Rafsanjani are two of the most important people in Iran's clerical regime. Their views on the succession, foreign policy, the war with Iraq, and the economy have a significant impact on the course of the Islamic Republic. Their influence will increase after Ayatollah Khomeini dies or retires, although we do not believe that either will succeed him. Both are middle-level clerics, one step below ayatollah and too junior to succeed Khomeini directly. At present we believe senior cleric Hussein Ali Montazeri is the most likely successor to Khomeini.

There are senior clerics and revolutionary organizations outside the government whose authority and influence at times exceed that of Rafsanjani and Khamenei. Since early 1982, however, President Khamenei has had some success in establishing government control over revolutionary organizations. Coordination has improved within the government,

enhancing Khamenei's position as President. At the same time, however,

Assembly Speaker Rafsanjani has emerged as the most influential person in the regime after Khomeini, even though under Iran's constitution, President Khamenei is the highest authority in the country after the Ayatollah. We believe this situation has increased personal conflicts between Khamenei and Rafsanjani, whose relationship is already aggravated by institutional rivalries.

Power Bases

Rafsanjani. Ali Akbar Rafsanjani, we believe, is an ambitious and opportunistic politician who derives much of his authority from his close personal relationship with Ayatollah Khomeini. He benefits from real or at least popularly perceived family relationships with Khomeini.

We are uncertain whether Rafsanjani actually has family ties to Khomeini, but he almost certainly plays on these and similar reports of a close link to Khomeini to increase his popular appeal. He is constantly working to increase his power base so that he can continue to be influential after Khomeini dies.

Rafsanjani's record of anti-Shah activity and his imprisonment by the Shah give him excellent revolutionary credentials. Rafsanjani was arrested in the early 1970s for cooperating with the Mujahedin-e-Khalq. While in prison he had contact with some currently influential Iranians, including President Khamenei,

During the revolution, as a leader of a pro-Khomeini student group, he was involved in organizing demonstrations and distributing the Ayatollah's messages inside Iran,

Rafsanjani's role as one of the leaders of Tehran's Friday prayers and his position as spokesman for Iran's Supreme Defense Council give him important forums to influence policy and public opinion.² During the past 21 months Rafsanjani has led Friday prayers 48 times, far more than any other Iranian leader.

his oratorical abilities and his perceived lack of affiliation

² Friday prayers are a primary tool in Iran for establishing direct contact between the ruling fundamentalist clerics and the people. At Friday prayer services throughout Iran, clerics deliver sermons that are coordinated by authorities in Qom. They provide a political and religious context in which the people are instructed on how to view current events.

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with extremist factions make him very popular with the masses. His sermons show the full use he makes of his abilities in addressing the thousands of Iranians who gather each Friday for prayers at Tehran University. He speaks extensively on economic and foreign policy issues. His speeches tend to emphasize positions he believes will please the crowd and reflect changes

in the political climate. As spokesman for the Supreme Defense Council, he enunciates major changes in Iranian strategy in the war with Iraq and Iran's

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policy toward mediation efforts. Moreover, the Iranian media highlight his Friday prayer sermons and his statements as spokesman for the Supreme Defense Council, giving him wide exposure and spreading his views throughout Iran. [redacted]

Rafsanjani has made the Majlis, a rubberstamp assembly under the Shah, an influential lawmaking body and another forum in which he can influence events. Analysis of Majlis proceedings indicates that as Speaker he controls the direction of debate and has final review of legislation. [redacted]

[redacted] members who have expressed their opposition by absenting themselves from proceedings have found their seats filled by replacements chosen in hastily called local elections. His duties in the Majlis also give him access to important leaders from all regions of Iran. [redacted]

Rafsanjani helped found the Islamic Republic Party, the only legal party in Iran, and is a member of its Administrative and Central Committees. Lack of press coverage of his party activities suggests he is not active in party functions, but his membership gives him further access to additional power centers. By controlling party funds he has considerable say in who receives significant party positions. [redacted]

Rafsanjani has longstanding ties with the Revolutionary Guard, the regime's main internal security force. He was involved in training and weapons procurement for the Guard in 1979, shortly after the revolution, [redacted]

[redacted] Rafsanjani supported the establishment of a Guard Ministry in late 1982. The present Minister of the Revolutionary Guard, Mohsen Rafiq-Dust, is a close friend of Rafsanjani's. [redacted]

[redacted] His cousin is the director of the Revolutionary Guard communications network. [redacted]

Khamenei. Khamenei's revolutionary credentials are similar to Rafsanjani's. He, too, is close to Khomeini, having studied under the Ayatollah during the 1960s in Iraq. [redacted] He also has a history of anti-Shah activity. He was

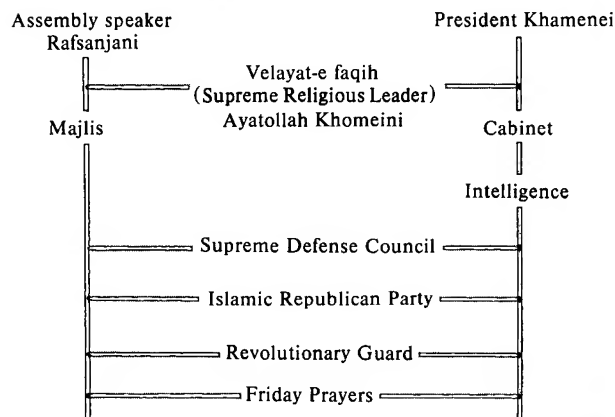


Ali Rafsanjani

Sygma ©

arrested in the early 1970s for aiding the anti-Shah Fedayeen. He participated in propaganda activities among theological students in Mashhad and was influential in forming the ideological position of the Islamic Republic Party, according to press reports. [redacted]

Sources of Influence for Rafsanjani and Khamenei



— Direct source
 — Indirect source



Ali Khamenei

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Much of Khamenei's authority derives from his position as chief executive, which gives him overall control of the government's administrative apparatus. As President he is responsible for carrying out constitutional laws and for organizing the relationship between the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government. He also can veto bills and nominate the Prime Minister.

Khamenei's previous positions as under secretary in the Ministry of Defense and head of the Revolutionary Guard enabled him to establish close relations with both organizations.

Although Ayatollah Khomeini, as commander in chief of the armed forces, controls the Iranian Army, he is unconcerned with detail, and overall control of the Army is exercised by President Khamenei.

this control has afforded Khamenei some political advantage over Rafsanjani.

Khamenei was reelected secretary general of the Islamic Republic Party in May 1983 and won a seat on its Central Committee but, according to Iranian press reports, came in second to Rafsanjani in the voting. Khamenei controls the Islamic Republic Party newspaper, *Islamic Republic*, which he has used to attack his enemies and advance both the regime's policies and himself.

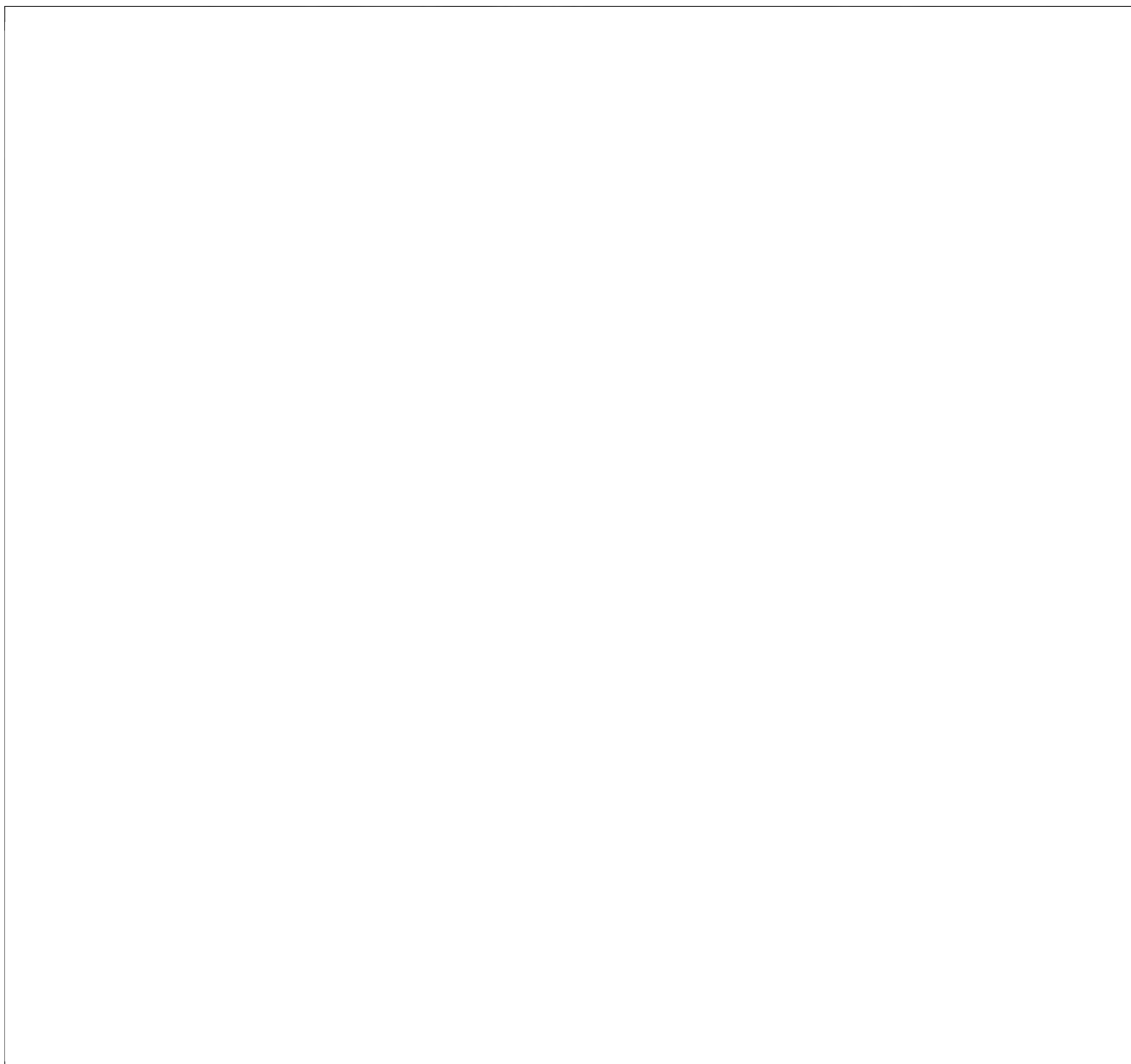
Khamenei is a member of a small group of Turkic-speaking Iranian leaders who come from Tabriz and who control the Islamic Republic Party. Prime Minister Musavi-Khamenei, judiciary head Musavi-Ardabili, Foreign Minister Velayati, and revolutionary prosecutor Musavi-Tabrizi are also members of the group.

Khamenei also has an important forum to influence policy as Tehran's Friday prayer leader.³ That he succeeded Ayatollah Montazeri⁴ as Friday prayer

³ Rafsanjani is only one of several acting Friday prayer leaders in Tehran.

⁴ Ayatollah Montazeri holds some of Ayatollah Khomeini's authority over the judiciary and Revolutionary Guard but holds no official position in the government.

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leader indicates he was seen by Khomeini as a clerical
comer and that he probably has a better academic
record than Rafsanjani, [redacted]

[redacted] He consistently attracts
much larger audiences than Rafsanjani does when
giving the Friday sermon [redacted]

[redacted] An assassination attempt in 1981, which

damaged his vocal cords, has reduced his public
speaking engagements but gained him the title from
Khomeini of Living Martyr in a nation obsessed with
martyrdom. [redacted]

³ Because of injuries Khamenei sustained during an assassination
attempt, he usually leads Friday prayers only on religious and
revolutionary holidays, which may explain the larger audiences. [redacted]

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Competition

We believe that the rivalry between the two men that has developed since the revolution is mainly over power rather than ideology. The competition is magnified by a rivalry between the executive and legislative branches of government. Khamenei, at times, has publicly accused the Majlis of hurting government policy because of its slowness in passing bills. Rafsanjani has publicly complained that some of the bills presented to the Majlis are poorly conceived. [redacted]

Their competition is also manifested in their attempts to control various security forces. Both leaders believe that control of the security services will be the crucial factor in determining influence after Khomeini dies, [redacted]

[redacted] Khamenei is trying to consolidate control over all the Revolutionary Guard components, which currently divide their loyalties among the leading clerics. In July 1983 Khamenei had Revolutionary Guard Minister Rafiq-Dust, who is supported by Rafsanjani, fired because he dismissed Khamenei-supported Guard Commander Rezai, [redacted]

[redacted] The dispute was taken to Ayatollah Khomeini, who "resolved" the problem by reinstating both officials. [redacted]

Khamenei and Rafsanjani are also maneuvering to expand their influence and attract followers within the Iranian Air Force, [redacted]

[redacted] Khamenei has pushed for increased benefits for the officer corps, while Rafsanjani has emphasized benefits for enlisted men and noncommissioned officers. Former Air Force chief Col. Hasan Monipur, reportedly a supporter of Khamenei, resigned last November probably because of ill health. In the ensuing reshuffle of Air Force commanders, Col. Heydar Safari, reportedly a supporter of Rafsanjani, was promoted to Deputy Air Force Commander, [redacted]

[redacted] both men realize that Khomeini does not countenance public squabbling between key Iranian officials and are extremely careful not to incur Khomeini's ire in this regard. [redacted]

[redacted] their respective militias have actually fought each other after receiving conflicting orders from the two leaders. [redacted]

Succession Issue. We believe the power struggle between Khamenei and Rafsanjani is centered on the question of who should succeed Ayatollah Khomeini and the form of the regime after he dies. Neither Rafsanjani nor Khamenei is of sufficient clerical rank to succeed Khomeini directly, but both want to be influential behind the scenes, [redacted]

[redacted] In seeking political advantage they take tactical positions on the succession issue that often contradict their previous stands. Ayatollah Montazeri has been presumed by Iranians to be Khomeini's choice as heir. Khamenei and Rafsanjani, while supporting the concept of a clerical monopoly on political leadership, have been described [redacted] as both supporting and opposing Montazeri as heir. Public statements by both men suggest that Rafsanjani supports Montazeri, while Khamenei favors a three- to five-man council of senior clerics which could possibly be dominated by ayatollahs, such as Meshkini and Musavi-Ardabili, from Azarbaijan, Khamenei's ancestral province. We believe Rafsanjani supports Montazeri largely because he believes Montazeri has Ayatollah Khomeini's backing. Rafsanjani also hopes to be able to manipulate the situation if Montazeri becomes leader. [redacted]

Actions in January 1983 by the Council of Experts, which is to choose a successor to Khomeini, suggest that a compromise over the succession may have been reached. The Council elected Ayatollah Meshkini, whose views on the succession are similar to Khamenei's, as chairman. Rafsanjani, however, was elected as one of two deputy chairmen. In addition, we believe Khomeini's will calls for a single successor who should call on the Council of Experts for guidance. [redacted]

These two moves have established the basis for a power-sharing arrangement. If Montazeri succeeds Ayatollah Khomeini, [redacted]

[redacted] Rafsanjani will be able to manipulate the situation in Tehran to check Khamenei's influence while Montazeri is isolated in Qom. We believe Khamenei, by virtue of his support for Meshkini and

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The Succession Issue

The course of the Islamic Republic depends to a large extent on how the clerics manage the succession to Khomeini. We believe Khomeini's will ensures a smooth succession, at least in the short term, because no cleric will be able to defy Khomeini's written orders immediately following his death. The possibility of a smooth succession is also increased by the establishment of the Council of Experts and by the clerics' knowledge that their control of the government would be threatened by an intensive succession struggle. Political opportunism and the theological and historical precedents that define clerical ideology encourage compromise among the clerics. []

In December 1982 the clerical regime elected an 83-man Assembly of Experts whose job it is to choose Khomeini's successor(s). Under the Constitution, the Assembly may select either one cleric or a council of three or five clerics. The necessary machinery is thus in place. Montazeri has been maneuvered into positions of responsibility delegated by Khomeini that are designed to make him seem the obvious heir. But Khomeini has also delegated similar responsibilities to Meshkini. []

Without Khomeini's overarching authority, there is a chance that the clerics' disputes could become uncontrollable. No other cleric in Iran has Khomeini's stature of unopposed authority, and Shiism has a tradition of violent clashes between rival clerical groups while one dominant faction is being replaced by another. We believe such clashes could trigger wider violence that would threaten the stability of the Islamic Republic. Many clerics retain close ties to

factions in the Revolutionary Guard and to individuals in the regular Army. The organizations currently act as constraints on each other, and the professional military seems less inclined than the Guard to political involvement. If splits in clerical ranks precipitated a breakdown in regime authority, ambitious leaders in both the Guard and the Army would probably attempt to align themselves with their various clerical associates in a bid for power, increasing the possibilities for a descent into anarchy. []

We believe the grand ayatollahs may enter the succession process to modify the regime's ideology in favor of curbing clerical involvement in running the government. They have stayed in the background for the most part since 1979, but recently grand Ayatollah Shirazi, ayatollahs in Mashhad and Esfahan, and possibly even grand Ayatollah Khoi have sponsored demonstrations against the government in Iranian cities, according to the Iranian media. We believe such activities, if sustained, would challenge the activist clerics and would be especially threatening after Khomeini's death. []

We do not believe the Soviets would become involved in a succession process unless there was a total breakdown in authority. While some leading clerics may have ties with the Soviets, there is no evidence that any would attempt to or could use Soviet power to further their ambitions. A Soviet connection would be the kiss of death to any cleric. His opponents would use it as a major rallying point to remove him from power. []

his position as President, will retain enough power, however, to balance Rafsanjani. We believe part of the deal may involve elevating both Rafsanjani and Khamenei to the rank of ayatollah when Khomeini dies. Both are having religious studies written in their name that must be accepted by the senior ayatollahs before the two contenders can assume that rank. []

Positions on Other Major Issues

The positions that Rafsanjani and Khamenei take on other issues, such as the war with Iraq, foreign policy, and the economy, appear similar if not identical. Their views do not always accord with their radical

Public Positions on the War

Rafsanjani	Khamenei	Rafsanjani	Khamenei
Iraq invades, September 1980			
Question of war and peace is up to Khomeini, September 1980		Peace conditions now include repatriation of Iraqi exiles, May 1982	Iran wants Saddam tried and \$150 billion in reparations. Peace conditions now include repatriation of Iraqi exiles. Will remain in state of war until reparations guaranteed, May 1982
Overthrow of Saddam is Iraqi people's responsibility, October 1980			
Iraqi offensive stalemates and Iraq asks Turkey to mediate, November 1980-January 1981			
Negotiations for cease-fire out of question as long as Iraq remains in Iran, January 1981		Not concerned with money or war damage but if Ba'th remains even without Saddam, he will press for reparations. Impossible that we will stay at border. The way to Jerusalem is through Karbala, June 1982	
Tehran agrees to receive Islamic Conference, UN, and non-aligned mediation plans		Iran attempts invasion, high casualties, July 1982	
No negotiation with Saddam under any circumstance. Aggressor should be tried and punished, March 1981	No cease-fire that does not condemn and punish aggressor. Progress toward peace almost impossible. Conditions for peace: (1) unconditional withdrawal; (2) punishment of and admission that Iraq is aggressor; (3) accept 1975 Algiers Accord, March 1981	Invasion to stop shelling of cities, to get reparations, to open road to Jerusalem. Iran needs no mediation since conditions remain the same, July 1982.	
		Invasion fails, August-October 1982	
Iran makes major gains, July 1981-June 1982. Khomeini makes prowar statements		Reparations can be paid in installments, August 1982	Request that UAE use all its efforts to stop war. Islamic conference mission had no new points. Cease-fire only when conditions met, October 1982
Peace conditions: (1) tribunal to identify aggressors; (2) payment of reparation, October 1981	So long as Iraqi troops in Iran, accepting peace and compromise will bring misery to Iran, November 1981	We want to achieve our rights in a way which will not make millions of Iraqis homeless, September 1982	We respect mediation efforts being taken to achieve our rights. We will go as far as it takes to silence enemy artillery, September 1982
1975 Algiers Accord valid and should be implemented, October 1981	Question of war damage and punishing aggressor will not prevent ending war once Iraqi troops withdraw, December 1981	Iranian units cross border, November 1982-January 1983	
If enemy remains in Iran cannot stop ourselves from penetrating Iraq. Reserve the right to go anywhere, December 1981		Mediation delegations should not come unless they have something new to say, December 1982	Rejects Islamic Conference Peace proposal, November 1982
Iranian offensive, February 1983			
Conditions for peace: (1) withdrawal of Iraqi troops; (2) trial and punishment of Iraq; (3) restoring Iran its usurped rights, January 1982	Peace viable only when not encouraging or rewarding aggression, January 1982	Last decisive operation launched. Period of grace granted by Iran was construed as weakness. Offensive will not stop until Gate of War is sealed. War has entered new stage. Saddam not our main enemy, the United States is. If we stay on our border we can still defeat Iraq, February 1983	We will not abandon conditions for peace. Withdrawal of Iraqi forces no longer main condition. Main condition is Saddam be punished. We cannot pay any attention to Saddam or his proposals, February 1983
Most important thing is Saddam and Ba'th be punished. Will gain rights by force. Could infiltrate Iraqi territory if wished. If peace terms not accepted we have right to take Baghdad but do not aim at entering Iraq, April 1982	No designs on Iraqi territory. Identification and punishment of aggressor must be done by world's wise men and peace lovers, April 1982		Iranian people will never kneel down to Iraqi-imposed war, January 1983

Public Positions on the War (continued)**Rafsanjani****Khamenei****Offensive fails, March-May 1983**

Operations limited to avoid casualties; we are trying to refrain from bloodshed. We have gone as far as we had planned to, March 1983

Martyrdom should be avoided . . . not the chief objective of the war, May 1983

Khomeini makes prowar statements, May-July 1983

Final solution is liberation of the people of Iraq. We will intensify our resistance, June 1983

As long as demands not met we will continue war. We should make Ramadan more blessed by increasing readiness to crush enemy, June 1983

orientation, reported group affiliation, or social class. Khamenei sometimes appears more idealistic and dogmatic, but when necessary, pragmatism prevails. Rafsanjani's positions appear to shift according to the political climate.

War. Both men appear to be in general agreement on Iran's strategy in its war with Iraq. Throughout most of the war Rafsanjani and Khamenei have publicly spoken against a negotiated settlement and repeatedly warned the Arab Gulf states not to aid Iraq. Khamenei said in October 1981 that the war should be seen as a jihad (holy war), and in February 1982 he said the war could end only with the defeat and humiliation of Iraq's President Saddam Husayn. Rafsanjani, in May 1982 and in February 1983, said the war would not end until Saddam's overthrow and,

strongly supported the invasion of Iraq.

In the spring of 1983, both men publicly moderated their positions, probably as a result of heavy casualties and growing popular disaffection for the conflict. Khamenei's statements indicated support for reduced fighting and possibly a negotiated settlement. Rafsanjani also made statements that showed increased

concern for casualties and support for a reduction in fighting. Rafsanjani urged the Gulf states to continue their mediation efforts however intransigent and extreme Iran's public statements on the subject might appear.

Their positions shift, however, based on what they believe Khomeini wants, and he made clear in late spring 1983 that a negotiated settlement was unacceptable. As a result, Khamenei's and Rafsanjani's most recent public statements have shifted again to conform with Khomeini's hardline position.

Foreign Policy. Both Rafsanjani and Khamenei appear in general agreement on foreign policy issues, such as exporting the revolution and relations with the Third World, the West, and the Communist countries. Both charge that international organizations like the United Nations and the Nonaligned Movement are under superpower influence. Rafsanjani appears more belligerent toward the Persian Gulf states, but both,

supported Ali Akbar Velayati's appointment as Foreign Minister and his policies of increasing Third World ties and trade relations with the West.

Hostility toward the United States is a consistent theme in both men's speeches. They view the United States as Iran's principal enemy and blame it for most of Iran's problems. In January 1981 Rafsanjani ruled out good relations with the United States after he was attacked by his opponents for not including the United States in a list of enemies. Khamenei often engages in anti-American tirades, sometimes giving the impression that the only problem in Iran worth his attention as President is the struggle against America. Khamenei can be pragmatic, however, and has favored trade with the United States for needed military supplies. In mid-1979, as an under secretary in the Ministry of Defense, he favored purchasing arms from the United States,

Khamenei and Rafsanjani on Relations With the United States
Khamenei

"Our archenemy is the United States . . . we will never tolerate that superpower . . . the one that is at the top of our list of enemies is the United States."

"We have no plan whatsoever to cooperate with or get near the United States. I hope our government will remain on this path . . . forever."

[redacted]

Both Rafsanjani and Khamenei have been accused [redacted] of being pro-Soviet. Khamenei reportedly has advocated strong ties with the USSR. He was called the "head of a group of pro-Soviet Azarbayjani Turkic speakers in the government" in 1982 by [redacted] the Western press. Rafsanjani in January 1982 said, "Unlike the West, the USSR does not create any trouble for us." Both men have been called Tudeh sympathizers, and then Tudeh Secretary General Kianuri [redacted] requested their help in arranging the release of arrested party members in March 1982. Rafsanjani publicly supported allowing Tudeh members and their supporters back in the universities in March 1982. Khamenei, however, is currently accused by exiled Tudeh members of being a rightist and allied with anti-Tudeh elements.

[redacted]

We believe that neither leader has been co-opted by the Soviets. Both have repeatedly condemned the USSR for its invasion of Afghanistan and are fundamentally dedicated to Islam, which has little in

Tehran's Relations With Moscow

Soviet-Iranian relations are at their lowest level since the Islamic revolution in 1979. Open polemics between the two countries have become standard fare. The Khomeini regime has arrested leaders of the Tudeh on charges of spying for the KGB, closed the offices of a variety of Soviet organizations in Iran, and harassed the Soviet Embassy in Tehran. The Kremlin has swung its support in the war to Iraq and has become less concerned about Tehran's reaction to Soviet operations against Afghan insurgents near the Iranian border. [redacted]

As long as Khomeini remains in power, Soviet influence in Iran will be minimal. Iran under Khomeini has become more dependent on Soviet and East European trade and transit routes, but this has not led to significant Soviet political leverage. Khomeini's reluctance to deal directly with the Soviets on a major scale is shared by most leading clerics in Iran, including Rafsanjani and Khamenei. After Khomeini dies, policies could moderate slightly if the Line of the Imam faction increases its power. Close relations between Iran and the Soviet Union while the clerics rule, however, are highly unlikely. [redacted]

common with Communism. They probably favor a tolerant attitude toward the Soviets and closer cooperation with Moscow on economic and military matters as long as there is no strategic military understanding or massive presence of Soviet experts in Iran. [redacted]

Export of the Revolution. Both men favor exporting the Islamic Revolution by means of propaganda and subversion. Analysis of their public statements suggests that, like Ayatollah Khomeini, both men see the world in terms of oppressor and oppressed and advocate dissemination of the revolution's social message to non-Muslim countries as well as aid to "liberation movements." [redacted]

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Khamenei and Rafsanjani on Export of the Revolution**Khamenei**

"Iran shall convey the voice of revolution to the peoples of the world in every possible way."

Rafsanjani

"The export of the revolution is something that we cannot prevent."

"The question of unity (against imperialism and Marxism) is not confined to Africa and the Islamic countries."

Khamenei on Muslim Unity

"We are friendly with Muslim and non-Muslim states as long as they do not attack us."

"The Islamic nation (Iran) does not regard its destiny as separate from the destiny of the world's Muslims."

"Purity and brotherhood link us to our Sunni brothers."

"There is no difference between Shia and Sunni."

"Iran seeks friendship, understanding, cooperation, and peaceful coexistence with all the Persian Gulf states."

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Khamenei appears willing to moderate his position on this issue, however, according to his public statements. He has said publicly that Iran is against using sabotage to export the revolution and that Iran's support for liberation movements is mostly spiritual. Khamenei stated in April 1982 that Iran wanted close relations with Turkey, Pakistan, and the Gulf states, but he has also called on the Gulf Arabs to overthrow their rulers and establish Islamic governments. He is a particularly active advocate of close economic and political ties with Turkey. He publicly rules out relations only with the United States, Israel, Jordan, France, and Egypt. He is also a strong advocate of close Sunni/Shia relations, and while calling on Muslim governments to follow Iran's example, he emphasizes Iran's desire for correct relations with the Gulf states. [redacted]

Rafsanjani has been less outspoken on exporting the revolution than Khamenei, probably because it is not a major issue for him. His record on other issues, however, leads us to believe that he also would moderate his position if he found it expedient to do so. [redacted]

Economy. Both leaders favor centralization of the economy and stress that priority should be given to solving the country's economic problems. They favor

land reform, centralized supervision of commerce, and centralized planning. Neither appears to favor sudden, radical changes, however, preferring to use bureaucratic and constitutional processes for change. They also are usually pragmatic on the issues of development, favoring foreign technical advice when necessary and when using it does not threaten economic independence. Rafsanjani favors an amnesty for exiled Iranian economic experts to encourage their return. Both favor employing and training Iranian technical experts even if they are not fervently Islamic. [redacted]

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Rafsanjani's wealth—[redacted] he owns large pistachio plantations—and his ties to the bazaar and large landowners have led many Iranian and Western analysts to conclude he opposes centralization and land reform. When land reform legislation was first introduced in the Majlis after the revolution, his statements indicated he was against land reform, and [redacted] he opposed nationalization of foreign trade in December 1982. His recent public statements, however,

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Rafsanjani on "a Socialist Economy"

"Islam does not approve of poverty and great wealth."

"When the Hidden Imam returns, people will receive to the extent they need and will contribute to the extent they are able."

"The high cost and unjust distribution of goods . . . is the last hope of the counterrevolution."

"Ownership of property does not mean one can misuse it."

indicate he now supports land reform, centralization, and adjustments of wealth. We believe he has changed his public position to curry political favor with the party, government, and clergy and to maintain broad popular support.

Khamenei's position on economics has been more consistent. He considers economic progress a major goal: "Our most major concern is currently the economy." Development must be balanced, however, and not depend on oil revenues or foreign imports. He strongly favors industrial and planning centralization and redistribution of wealth, and he apparently cooperates with Rafsanjani, at least some of the time, on this issue. In March 1982 he praised Majlis cooperation in government economic programs and budget planning.

Vulnerabilities

The power the two men wield has created enemies and resulted in attempts to curb their influence. Rafsanjani has been repeatedly accused of being corrupt.

In addition, some lower level clerics have accused him of being power hungry and an opportunist. Despite his generally excellent contacts with the bazaar, his reputation among some bazaar merchants has suffered because of his alleged misappropriation of funds, his practice of usury, and bribe taking,

His absence from the

two Islamic Republic Party meetings that were bombed in 1981 killing most of the regime's top leaders caused speculation that he was behind the bombings to eliminate opponents.

We believe Rafsanjani temporarily lost influence over the Tudeh/Soviet issue in April 1983. Rafsanjani, who has probably supported normal relations with the Soviets and the existence of the Tudeh Party, was several days late in speaking in support of the crack-down. His clerical qualifications were questioned by the Council of Guardians during this time,

and both radical and moderate groups openly criticized him. He made significantly fewer public statements for several weeks following the arrests. The critical period has passed, however, and he has reemerged as a major player in Iranian politics.

Khamenei also has not escaped criticism. He apparently has been admonished by Khomeini for disputes with other officials. He also has been accused of corruption although not so frequently as Rafsanjani. Khamenei is more austere and scholarly. He enjoys a significantly better reputation than Rafsanjani with Iran's religious leaders in Qom,

There is no identifiable group that opposes both men, although the four senior ayatollahs aside from Khomeini—Ayatollahs Golpayegoni, Najafi, Shirazi, and Shariat-Madari—remain opposed to direct rule by clerics and therefore at least indirectly opposed to Rafsanjani and Khamenei.

opposition to both men by the Line of the Imam group and the Hojatiyeh,⁶ but their positions on issues are at times the same as the views of these groups.

⁶ The *Hojatiyeh* faction favors strict Islamic law, use of Western technology to help the economy, limited clerical intervention in secular affairs, and export of the revolution. The *Hojatiyeh* opposes major economic reform and a single successor to Khomeini. The *Line of the Imam* emphasizes the more revolutionary aspects of Iran's revolution and favors good relations with the USSR, a centralized economy, and a single clerical successor to Khomeini.

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Khomeini's Position

Khomeini appears to try to balance Rafsanjani and Khamenei, permitting neither to achieve a decisive advantage over the other. Ayatollah Khomeini told Khamenei to cooperate with Rafsanjani in late 1982, [redacted]

[redacted] In November 1982 President Khamenei publicly praised the Majlis speaker. While addressing the staff of the Majlis public relations office, President Khamenei stated that Rafsanjani was one of the "exceptional personalities of the country, a master of theology and politics, a keen revolutionary, and farsighted." He also stated that Rafsanjani was second only to Khomeini. Also in late 1982, while speaking to Islamic Republic Party members in Isfahan, President Khamenei called Rafsanjani an important member of the party. [redacted]

With Rafsanjani apparently in ascendancy by the end of 1982, Khomeini began countering Rafsanjani's power by building up Khamenei. Rafsanjani was hurt on the Tudeh issue during the spring of 1983 and, probably at Khomeini's insistence, declared publicly in May 1983 that "a vote for him (Khamenei) is a vote for the Imam, the clergy, the Majlis. . . ." Khomeini, in January 1983, praised Khamenei, saying "you should not think you can find anyone in all the world . . . like Khamenei . . . who is committed to Islam and who is trying to serve this nation wholeheartedly." [redacted]

Outlook

While Khomeini remains alive, his ability to balance Rafsanjani and Khamenei will probably keep their rivalry in check. The rivalry will continue, however, at times boiling over and becoming public. Khomeini has made numerous speeches warning the clerics that personal rivalries and ambition are un-Islamic and should cease. [redacted]

Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's differences appear more personal than ideological, and they will probably keep changing their positions and alliances depending on their perception of the political climate. Rafsanjani, weakened slightly by the Tudeh crackdown, will be careful not to be caught off guard again. Both leaders will seek to manipulate different factional groups, hoping their views will prevail. [redacted]

Implications for the United States

The rivalry between Khamenei and Rafsanjani has important implications for the future of Iran and, as a result, for US policy in the Persian Gulf. If the succession deteriorates into open conflict, there is a strong possibility that it could turn violent. Both men have links with the security forces, which could tempt them to resort to force if their interests are seriously challenged. Other factions would become involved, causing a general deterioration of the security situation in Iran. This could result in a chaotic situation that could disrupt oil exports and encourage Soviet intervention. [redacted] Rafsanjani's and Khamenei's influence with the Revolutionary Guard and military is about equal, and we believe it is impossible to determine which leader would win such a struggle. [redacted]

If, as is more likely, the succession is smooth and Rafsanjani and Khamenei retain their positions of influence, the regime's policies will remain much the same. Some moderation is possible as they become more confident in the regime's and in their own ability to survive. Neither leader is strong enough to be the determining factor in Iran's policies, but hostility toward the United States could lessen if they view it in Iran's interest despite their current public position. Relations with the USSR could also improve, but we do not believe either leader would argue for close ties, and a basically nonaligned policy will be maintained. [redacted]

Both men would probably push for a mediated settlement in the war with Iraq, which would considerably lessen the chance of hostilities spreading to the moderate oil-exporting states in the Persian Gulf. Khamenei and possibly Rafsanjani would argue for less aggressive export of the revolution, but neither would stop Iranian meddling completely. [redacted]

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